

Amendment fuels debate over gays

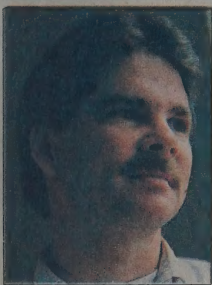
Cause of homosexuality remains a question mark

By **Angela Dire**/Gazette Telegraph

One summer day many years ago, Rosemary Fall heard deep sobs coming from a bedroom in her Colorado Springs home.

She opened the door and found her son Bill who was home from college for a few weeks. He looked up at her tearfully and, for the first time, acknowledged he was gay.

"Mother," she remembers him stammering, "I don't know why I am the way I am."



Ken Hass: Describes at seminar how he gave up his homosexual ways for a married Christian life.

A personal revelation then, a politicized debate now.

Homosexuality: choice or destiny? Is it unalterable? Or is it a behavior that can be changed?

Political and religious conservatives say people like Bill Fall are the way they are because something went wrong in their lives. They say homosexuality is deviant behavior that should and can be changed through counseling or psychotherapy.

Gay people and most psychologists say homosexuality is a natural human behavior. Homosexuals, they say, no more choose their sexuality than do heterosexuals.

"They are just normal people," says Rosemary Fall, a member of the local chapter of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. "They are happy with who they are, so why should it be such a problem?" It doesn't matter to Fall why her youngest son, who died last year of AIDS, was the way he was.

But it may matter to the state's voters. In November, they must decide whether they agree with Colorado For Family Values, a conservative group that wants a state constitutional amendment to prevent governments from protecting homosexuals against discrimination.

The sponsors of Amendment 2 say gays don't deserve protection because they are not born homosexual and remain so only by choice. "There is no credible scientific evidence to support gay claims that gayness is either genetically determined or immutable," says group founder Tony Marco.

Psychologists disagree. They say most research indicates that homosexual feelings are a basic part of an individual's psyche. And they say those feelings often surface during childhood or early adolescence — before any sexual experience — and cannot be changed.

"Nothing in the data that we're aware of supports the idea that for most people sexual orientation is a choice," says Clinton Anderson, an officer with the Washington, D.C.,-based American Psychological Association.

Studies point to genetic cause

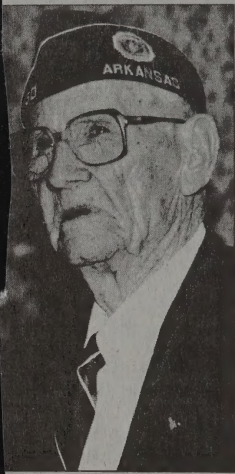
Researchers haven't proved conclusively that homosexuality is determined by genes, Anderson says. But a couple of controversial new studies seem to offer a biological explanation. In one, researchers found physical differences between the brains of gay and heterosexual men, but the sampling was too small and the methodology too questionable for the study to be conclusive. The other study found a high correlation of homosexuality in identical twin brothers that was lacking in fraternal twins and adopted brothers — where the genetic link was weaker or nonexistent.

Genetics might explain why homosexuality

See **GAYS/A3**

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"The government is
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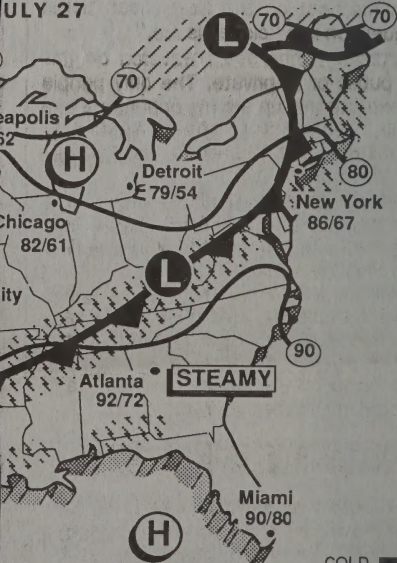
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Ralph Macchio,
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	Wed.
71t	91/71t
74pc	94/74pc
65s	85/67pc
78s	103/78s
70pc	90/70pc
69s	86/68pc
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56pc	73/55s
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67pc	86/68pc
74t	91/74pc
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City	Yest.	Today	Tues.	Wed.
Sioux Falls, SD	79/56pc	86/61pc	84/56s	83/57s
Spokane, WA	89/57s	87/56s	87/57pc	87/58s
Tampa, FL	92/76pc	91/76pc	92/76pc	92/75p
Topeka, KS	85/71r	87/62pc	90/63pc	87/65p
Tucson, AZ	103/72s	100/74pc	101/74pc	101/74s
Tulsa, OK	94/79pc	89/70pc	91/69pc	88/70t
Washington	81/70sh	86/68t	85/67pc	86/68p
Wichita, KS	89/70pc	98/66pc	93/67pc	90/69t
Wilmington, DE	78/69c	87/66t	84/65pc	87/66p

CANADA

City	Yest.	Today	Tues.	Wed.
Calgary, Alb.	68/59pc	78/52pc	77/48pc	68/48p
Edmonton, Alb.	71/54pc	73/50pc	71/48pc	71/48p
Montreal, Que.	78/66pc	73/52t	71/50pc	74/52st
Ottawa, Ont.	76/63pc	73/55sh	69/53pc	75/50st
Toronto, Ont.	73/64sh	75/55sh	75/59pc	76/57t

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Jerry and Rosemary Fall believe their son Bill, the youngest of four boys, was born gay. Rosemary Fall, a member of the local chapter of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, holds a hat that belonged to Bill. He died of AIDS last year.

Gays/Question debated at personal, political levels

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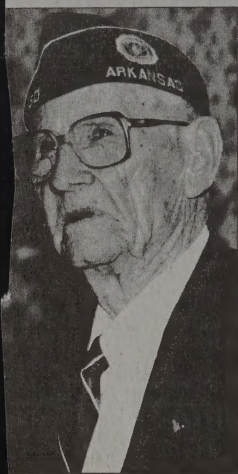
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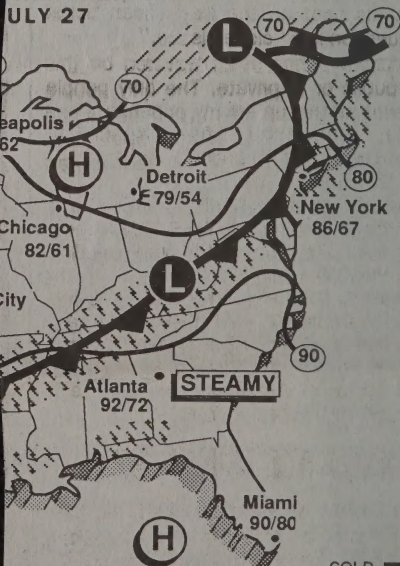
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occurs across cultures and in many living species — from humans to primates to lizards. But researchers say they may eventually discover a variety of causes for homosexuality.

"Homosexuality is simply too varied in its expression, too widely occurring in nature, to be the result of any simple, single cause," gay psychiatrist Richard C. Pillard has written.

Pillard echoes the beliefs of many psychiatrists, who no longer buy the old theories that homosexuality is the result of sexual repression, bad childhood experiences or some other problem.

But Gerda Fletcher didn't need science to tell her that. The Colorado Springs woman has a 27-year-old son, David, who is gay. He came home during his last year of medical school and told his parents. Fletcher says she was first shocked, then disappointed that there would not be a daughter-in-law or a grandchild, and finally happy for him.

"I never believed I was a dreadful mother," Fletcher says with a wry smile, "or that David was gay because his father went on business trips. I never have believed that, and the more I meet parents of other gay people, I believe it even less."

Common sense and gut feelings tell Rosemary and Jerry Fall that their son was born gay. Bill Fall was the youngest of four boys in a practicing Catholic family — a typical, happy child.

But there was something different about him, too. He was neater than most boys, more expressive, and warm. Jerry Fall remembers a neighbor saying once, "You know, Bill ought to be a little girl." Fall remembers replying, "It's not up to me to judge what they're going to be. He is what he is."

But Bill Fall struggled with that. Like many young gay people, he contemplated suicide several times, and he was not open about being gay because he feared it might cost him a job. In 1987, he found out he'd contracted the AIDS virus. He died in April 1991.

And so Rosemary Fall asks the rhetorical question posed by so many gay people: Why would anyone choose a lifestyle that can bring so much

grief from society? "Why would they choose to be made fun of," asks Fall, "as though they are sick animals who do nothing but lie around having sick sex."

Some call homosexuality a sickness

But those who oppose gay rights say homosexuality is indeed a sickness. In a fund-raising letter he wrote for Colorado for Family Values, former Colorado Republican Sen. Bill Armstrong said the perception among homosexuals that they were discriminated against was really "the self-created personal miseries of pleasure-addicted gays."

Armstrong and others say civil rights laws that protect women and minorities should not be used to protect a deviant behavior. "Should people who can change their behavior be given the same protections as people who can't change the color of their skin?" asks one of Colorado For Family Values pamphlets.

Although the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders in 1973, some medical professionals still treat homosexuality as a psychosis and continue to seek its cure. For almost a century, doctors and therapists have tried to change homosexuals into heterosexuals using methods ranging from castration and electroshock to psychoanalysis and a 12-step program modeled after Alcoholics Anonymous.

Programs to change people's sexuality are growing in numbers, and conservative Christian groups who believe homosexuality is a sin are starting many of them.

On a recent Saturday morning at the Village 7 Presbyterian Church in Colorado Springs, 38-year-old Ken Hass told about 50 church members how he abandoned his homosexual ways for a married Christian life.

The seminar on "Sexual Sin" was put on by Joyce Marco and her husband, Tony, co-founder of Colorado for Family Values. Joyce Marco has publicly said that her adult daughter from a previous marriage is a lesbian.

Hass related many of the things espoused by the conservative group.

He talked about how his life as a homosexual was a deviant one that probably began when he was molested at age 5 by a woman, a friend of the family. "This did not lead me to the homosexual lifestyle," Hass told the group, "What it did was open the floodgates to sexual pleasure and sin."

He talked about how he struggled with homosexual thoughts and feelings in his first few years as a Christian and a married man but finally overcame them. Deep down, he said, he had always had an attraction for women.

"I never, ever entertained the thought I was born that way," he told the group. "I've never met a homosexual in my life. I've only met people who've participated in homosexual behavior."

Doubt cast on conversion programs

Psychologists have heard many similar testimonies. They aren't convinced. They say research shows that people who participate in conversion programs probably weren't homosexual to begin with — but bisexual. Even those gay people who change their sexual behavior usually never change the basic feelings and desires that make them homosexual, psychologists say.

"Although many of these practitioners publicly promise change, they privately acknowledge that celibacy is the realistic goal to which homosexuals must aspire," Seattle psychologist Douglas C. Haldeman has written.

But gay rights activists and even some psychologists grow tired of the debate. Even if people could change their sexuality, that has little to do with whether they should be protected from discrimination, they say, because anti-bias laws now protect choices people make — such as practicing a religion or raising a family.

"The issue is not really about the reality of science and research," says Anderson of the American Psychological Association.

In the end, he says, science can't answer the question Colorado voters must in November.

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Doctors say more study needed on safety of exercise in pregnancy

Associated Press

CHICAGO — A researcher said exercising during pregnancy apparently causes no harm to the baby or to a healthy woman. Doctors at an American Heart Association conference said more study is needed, however.

"Exercise appears to be safe in moderation," said Dr. Jean-Claude Veille of Bowman Gray School of Medicine in Winston-Salem, N.C. "But at this point in research, you can't be certain that nothing is wrong."

Veille also said he sees the need for more study of exercise by pregnant women with diabetes, hypertension, sickle cell anemia and other ailments.

He presented his finding during the weekend at the association's Scientific Conference on the Cardiovascular Response to Exercise.

In the study, which was published in the American Journal of Cardiology, Veille examined the effects of exercise on the hearts of 16 physically fit pregnant women. He used ultrasound to monitor the umbilical artery before and after the women exercised strenuously on a stationary bicycle.

He found no significant risk to the mothers. But three experienced a sudden drop in the fetal heart rate after exercising.

All the heart rates returned to normal within minutes, and all the women delivered healthy infants.

Veille and another researcher said obtaining an accurate reading during exercise is difficult because the mother and fetus move about. "It probably can't be done," said Dr. Fred Lotgering of Erasmus University in Rotterdam, Netherlands.

In a study by Lotgering published in the Journal of Applied Physiology in 1991, he found that performance is reduced in pregnant women doing such weight-bearing exercise as walking on a treadmill. Riding a stationary bicycle is not considered a weight-bearing exercise.

"If they are used to riding 100 miles a day before pregnancy, they can keep up the same exercise," Lotgering said. "But if we are talking about hiking, the pregnancy weight makes the speed and distance go down."

In a separate study, Lotgering concluded that exercise does not affect the blood pressure of healthy pregnant women.

BRIEFING

Six killed in bus-car collision: A chartered bus heading for an amusement park Sunday slammed into a car and burst into flames, killing at least six people and injuring 47 others, authorities said in Vernon Township, N.J.

The bus apparently lost brake power on a two-lane road, said police Capt. George Dolak. The bus hit the car, then overturned, crashed into another car and went up in flames, he said.

Many of the injured were children and people in their 20s, hospital officials said. At least eight were injured critically, including the bus driver.

One of the injured told staff members at St. Anthony's Hospital in Warwick, N.Y., that the bus was going to Action Park in Vernon, said hospital spokeswoman Nina Lewis. The hospital didn't know the nature of the group.

Brush fire blamed on fireworks: An 800-acre brush fire apparently started by teen-agers playing with fireworks was brought under control Sunday in Utah.

Rain on Saturday helped firefighters gain the upper hand.

The blaze in the foothills above Pleasant Grove, about 25 miles south of Salt Lake City, began Friday. Two boys, ages 16 and 17, were arrested Saturday and referred to Juvenile Court, police said.

"The fireworks were lit on a hard surface in the foothills and when detonated lit an area of grassland on fire," said officer Cody Cullimore.

The fire is the latest of a series of brush fires that recently have blackened more than 5,000 acres of Utah grasslands.

Alde says Reagan not target of Iran-Contra probe: An aide to former President Ronald Reagan on Sunday disputed an article in The Washington Post that said the independent counsel investigating the Iran-Contra scandal was considering indicting Reagan.

"We have been assured by the independent counsel that President Reagan is not a target of that investigation," said Reagan's spokeswoman, Catherine Goldberg, in a statement.

The Post reported that the independent counsel, Lawrence Walsh, was considering indicting the former president and several of his closest advisers on charges of criminal conspiracy in an effort to cover up the United States' role in shipping Hawk anti-aircraft missiles to Iran.

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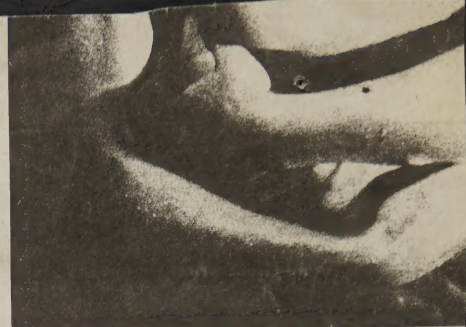
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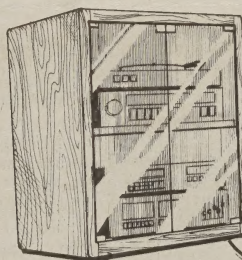
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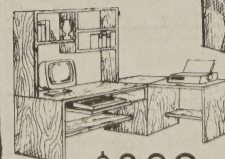


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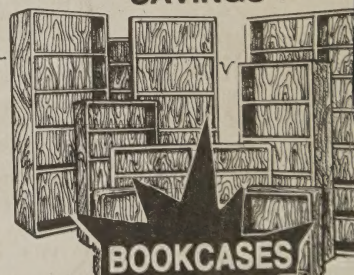


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